

Goal 4.1:
Attract the
best and brightest
candidates the
current market
can provide.

Findings

There is a need to encourage entry into the profession by a diverse group of talented individuals who incorporate not only traditional library science backgrounds, but various additional professional competencies such as public health, computer programming, and informatics to complement library skills while simultaneously providing the diverse talents required in the modern health sciences library.

Historically, candidates have been discouraged from pursuing the library profession due to stereotypes and lack of information. Candidates remain unaware of the potential the field has to offer and are often ignorant of this exciting career opportunity. Most recruits do not associate the kinds of activities librarians actually carry out with the field itself⁴⁷ and this fact, combined with the lower salary range that is common to librarianship⁴⁸ (as opposed to other well-known professions such as medicine or law) serves to discourage many potential candidates.

However, the climate of librarianship and information technology have altered dramatically. Librarians need to educate society about the high level of skill and expertise that characterize today's health sciences librarian; otherwise the field may be denied needed high level professionals.

The Panel believes that these recruitment efforts should be recognized as important by the profession as a whole. Professionals in the field, both current practitioners and library school faculty, must ask themselves if recruitment efforts have matched the professed goals of the profession, and, in response, must adjust their current level of personal and professional activities to achieve this goal.

Recommendations

- ▼ *The Medical Library Association and other professional organizations should undertake an aggressive recruitment program to encourage entry into the profession by a diverse group of talented individuals.*
- ▼ *Health sciences librarians should promote the field to potential candidates and be prepared to encourage future practitioners and leaders in the field.*
- ▼ *Schools of library and information science should mount aggressive campaigns to recruit future library professionals with leadership potential.*

Possible Implementation Steps

By professional associations and schools of library and information science:

Encourage highly suitable candidates to pursue librarianship in the health sciences by promoting the profession as an



attractive and significant career. Make marketing and image building campaigns a high priority.

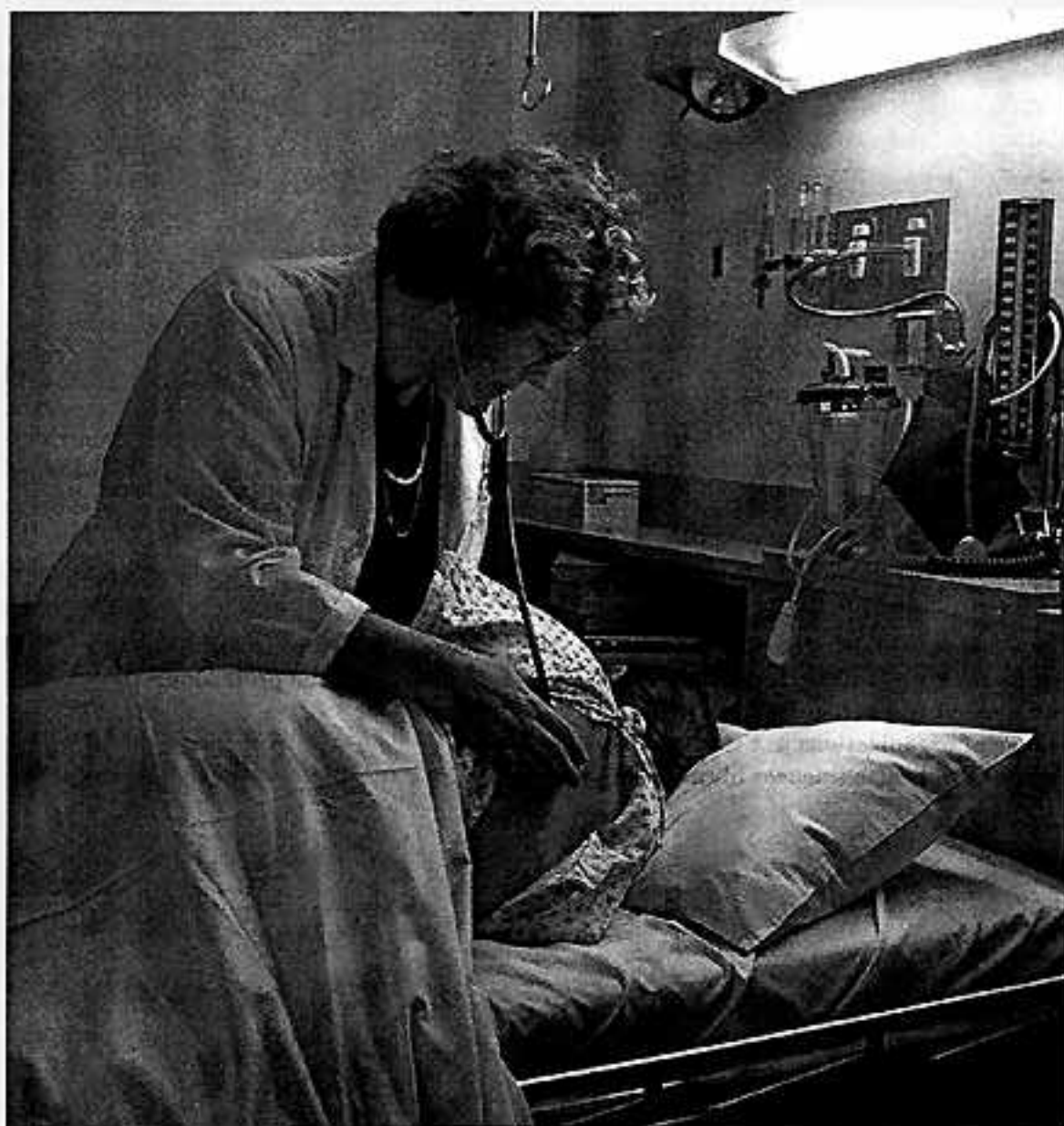
Direct recruitment efforts at undergraduates. Introduce students with potential to the challenges of the profession through substantive library work.

Directly involve library school faculty in identifying and recruiting highly qualified candidates. Reward faculty for these

activities as part of their required academic track activities.

Attract highly motivated candidates at an early age through recruiting and career planning activities at both the primary and secondary school levels.

Emphasize one-on-one contact with potential recruits by health sciences librarians or library school faculty.



Goal 4.2: Achieve greater cultural and ethnic diversity in the profession.

Findings

Less than 10% of the currently active professional health sciences librarians are minorities.⁴⁹

Only 8.5% of the 1991-92 M.L.S. graduates in this country were members of minority groups, according to statistics compiled by the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE).⁵⁰

During the ten year period from 1981-82 to 1991-92, the overall percentage of ethnic minorities receiving master's degrees from programs accredited by the American Library Association (ALA) edged up by only 1.2%.⁵¹

Of the 58 schools reporting to ALISE, nine accounted for more than half of all African American graduates.⁵²

There is a need to recruit candidates who possess the full range of characteristics necessary to reflect both the cultural diversity of the nation and the wide range of expertise required to function successfully in today's highly technical library environment.⁵³

The Panel believes that in order to address these changes and respond to the specific health information needs of the minority community, recruitment efforts must be intensified and expanded across a wide range of organizations not traditionally attuned to health sciences librarianship.

Recommendations

▼ *The MLA, NLM, African American Medical Library Association, and other organizations should together make a special effort to increase the recruitment of qualified minorities into the profession. These efforts need to begin early and be intensive enough so that the potential librarians attain adequate quantitative skills and background to compete effectively.*

▼ *Schools of library and information science should provide a positive academic environment for minority students. Faculty must be sensitive to minority issues to enhance the attractiveness of library school programs and provide an environment conducive to the success of minority students.*

Possible Implementation Steps

By NLM and MLA:

Establish a national committee of minority health sciences librarians to explore new strategies for attracting minorities into the profession.

By schools of library and information science:

Direct recruitment efforts to regions that have high percentages of minorities;

Help with career planning at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) so as to increase the pool from which the library schools draw their students;⁵⁴ and

Provide scholarships and fellowships to minority students.

By professional associations:

Work with minority-oriented professional library associations such as the African-American Medical Library Association, the Black Caucus of the American Library Association, the Asian/Pacific Islander Library Association, and the American Indian Library Association to begin a nationwide recruitment drive utilizing recruitment literature aimed at minority student populations.⁵⁵

Actively participate in college and university campus career fairs as a regular recruitment activity. Channel such activities through other non-library minority organizations such as the United Negro College Fund, the Urban League, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and comparable organizations serving other minority groups in order to reach the targeted audiences.⁵⁶

